CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An interactive response system comprising:

means for acquiring an utterance from a user;

means for recognising a plurality of words from the utterance;

means for comparing the actual duration of the utterance with an ideal duration of the recognised words; and

means for prompting the user as to the speed of delivery of the utterance according to the results of the comparison.

2. A system as in claim 1 wherein the means for comparing the actual duration of the utterance with an ideal duration of the recognised words comprises:

means for acquiring for each word the actual duration of delivery and ideal duration; and

means for comparing the differences in actual duration and ideal duration for each word.

3. A system as in claim 2 wherein the means for comparing the difference between actual duration and ideal duration of each word comprises:

calculating the ratio of actual duration and ideal duration for each word wherein the ratio is an indication of the speed of delivery of the utterance.

4. A system as in claim 3 wherein the means for comparing the actual duration of the utterance with an ideal duration of the recognised words comprises calculating an average of the ratio of words as an indication of the speed of delivery of the utterance.

5. A system as in claim 4 wherein each word has an associated recognition score and the ratio of a word is only used in the average calculation if the associated recognition score is above a lower threshold recognition score.

6. A system as in claim 1 wherein if the actual duration is greater than the ideal duration then prompting the user that the utterance has been delivered too slow and if the actual duration is less than the ideal duration then prompting the user that the utterance has been delivered too fast.

7. A system as in claim 1 wherein the means for prompting the user only operates if the actual duration and the ideal duration differ by more than a de minimus value.

8. A method in an interactive response system comprising:

acquiring an utterance from a user;

recognising a plurality of words from the utterance;

comparing the actual duration of the utterance with an ideal duration of the recognised words; and

prompting the user as to the speed of delivery of the utterance according to the results of the comparison.

9. A computer program product for processing one or more sets of data processing tasks, said computer program product comprising computer program instructions stored on a computer-readable storage medium for, when loaded into a computer and executed, causing a computer to carry out the steps of:

acquiring an utterance from a user;

recognising a plurality of words from the utterance;

comparing the actual duration of the utterance with an ideal duration of the recognised words; and

prompting the user as to the speed of delivery of the utterance according to the results of the comparison.